

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 SAJ-01 NIC-01 CIAE-00

COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 TRSE-00 XMB-02

OPIC-03 SP-02 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-05

SS-15 STR-01 CEA-01 AGR-05 INT-05 L-02 H-02 DODE-00

PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 /104 W
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R 131032Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2708

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 2686

E.O. 11652:N/A

AGS: PFOR EAID EGEN EG UR

SUBJECT: SOVIET-EGYPTIAN ECONOMIC RELATIONS

REF: A. CAIRO 2267; B. CAIRO 2292

FROM MAEASTRONE

1. IN MARCH 12 CALL ON DR. TAHER AMIN, MINISTER OF STATE FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION, DCM AND ECON OFF HAD OPPORTUNITY DISCUSS, INTER ALIA, RESULTS OF VISIT OF TEAM OF GOE MINISTERS TO MOSCOW IN FEBRUARY (SEE REFTELS) TO DISCUSS ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES. AMIN WAS ONE OF FOUR MINISTERS ON DELEGATION AND CHAIRED MEETINGS ON GOE SIDE FOR SUCH SUBJECTS AS DEBT RESCHEDULING, COOPERATION AGREEMENTS, FEASIBILITY STUDIES, ETC.

2. IN ANSWER TO QUESTION ON HOW HE HAD FOUND MOSCOW, AMIN SAID IT WAS "COLD", WHICH HE MADE CLEAR DID NOT APPLY ONLY TO WEATHER. GENERAL IMPRESSION WAS THAT EGYPTIANS GOT LITTLE OF CONCRETE NATURE WITH EXCEPTION OF
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TRADE AGREEMENT (REF B), WHICH HE SAID ACTUALLY WILL

RESULT IN INCREASED EXCHANGES SINCE LOWER PRICES FOR COTTON AND RICE WILL OFFSET INFLATION FACTOR, AND PROTOCOL ON FARM COOPERATIVES (REF A).

3. SPECIFICALLY, AMIN SAID THAT QUESTION OF DEBT RESCHEDULING WAS NOT SETTLED BUT WAS PUT OFF TO FUTURE CONSIDERATION. REPORTS INDICATING HE WOULD RETURN TO USSR IN LATTER HALF OF MARCH FOR SUCH FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WERE NOT CORRECT. NO COMMITMENTS WERE RECEIVED ON EXPANSION OF NAH HAMMADI ALUMINUM PLANT OR HELWAN STEEL MILL, CONTRARY TO PRESS ARTICLES. HE ALSO REITERATED HIS PREVIOUS POSITION THAT THERE WAS NO GOE COMMITMENT ON SOVIET PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT OF ABU TARTUR PHOSPHATES. IN FACT, HE SUGGESTED SOVIETS WERE "NOT INTERESTED RIGHT NOW". HOWEVER, SOVIETS PROMISED TO DELIVER LONG-AWAITED FEASIBILITY STUDY BY END OF MARCH. RUSSIAN SUPPORT FOR EXPANSION OF ALEXANDRIA PORT, ALSO REPORTED AS ONE OF RESULTS OF VISIT, WAS NOT ON AGENDA, ACCORDING TO AMIN,WHO SAID IT WAS NOT EVEN MENTIONED.

4. WITH EXCEPTION OF POSSIBLE UTILIZATION FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF 290 MILLION RUBLES REMAINING FROM PREVIOUS LOANS, AMIN SAID NEW CREDITS WERE OFFERED.

5. COMMENT: AMIN HAS NOT HAD TOO MUCH EXPERIENCE IN HIGH-LEVEL NEGOTIATIONS WITH NON-ARAB COUNTRIES,AND HIS THINKING IS CLEARLY WESTERN-ORIENTED. HOWEVER HE IS A SHREWD AND INTELLIGENT MAN WHO APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN BOTH SURPRISED AND DISAPPOINTED WITH MEAGRE RESULTS OF MOSCOW TRIP, ALTHOUGH WE HAVE DISTINCT IMPRESSION HE IS NOT OVERLY CONCERNED. (EGYPTIANS AS A GROUP ARE OF OPINION THAT THERE IS PLENTY OF MONEY AVAILABLE; UTILIZATION IS THE PROBLEM.)
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